

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1886

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 1190

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV PP BP

SUBJ: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOLOMONS

1. EMBASSY RECEIVED FROM AUSTRALIAN HICOMM PORT MORESBY
COPY OF 25 OCT REPORT FORWARDED FROM AUST REP HONIARA,
SUMMARY OF WHICH FOLLOWS.

2. FIRST MEETING OF ENLARGED SOLOMONS LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
WAS A FARCE. CHIEF MINISTER KENILOREA, WHO WAS ELECTED
TWO MONTHS PREVIOUSLY WITH 21 VOTES, FOUND HIMSELF LEADING
A GOVT OF NINE AND FACING AN OPPOSITION OF 29. WHAT
HAPPENED TO HIS 21 ORIGINAL SUPPORTERS IS UNKNOWN, BUT HE
HAD TO DELAY COMMENCEMENT OF ASSEMBLY FOR NEARLY A MONTH
TO FIND EIGHT MEMBERS PREPARED TO SERVE UNDER HIM AS
MINISTERS. ONE EXPLANATION GIVEN TO AUSTRALIAN COMMISSIONER
IS THAT GOVERNOR BRIEFED NEW MEMBERS IN FASHION CALCULATED
TO SUPPORT KENILOREA, BUT THEY LATER DECIDED MAMALONI
"WAS NOT THE CORRUPT LITTLE DEVIL THEY HAD BEEN XJI B
BELIEVE AND MANY OF THEM TRANSFERRED THEIR SUPPORT TO HIM."

3. FORMER CHIEF MINISTER MAMALONI AND BART ULUFA'ULU,
LEADER OF SOLOMON ISLANDS WORKERS' UNION (SIGWU) HAVE
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MANAGED TO WORK TOGETHER AND NOW HAVE TWENTY-NINE-MEMBER

OPPOSITION GROUP WHICH VOTED UNANIMOUSLY
THROUGHOUT LEGISLATIVE MEETING TO DEFEAT EVERY PIECE
OF LEGISLATION THE KENILOREA GOVT PUT FORWARD.
KENILOREA REFUSED TO RECOGNIZE THE OPPOSITION UNTIL
MAMALONI POINTED OUT IT COULD DEFEAT GOVT AT ANY TIME.
OPPOSITION STRATEGY IS TO EXPOSE INCOMPETENCE AND INEXPERIENCE
OF CURRENT GOVT. THE NEXT STEP IS TO
REJECT BUDGET AT 23 NOV MEETING OF LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
AND IF KENILOREA DOES NOT RESIGN (HE TOLD AUST COMMISSIONER
THAT HE WILL NEVER DO SO) TO BRING HIM DOWN WITH
A NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION. KENILOREA HAS OPTION OF ASKING
GOVERNOR GENERAL TO DISSOLVE THE ASSEMBLY BEFORE A
NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION CAN BE BROUGHT SHOULD THE BUDGET BE
REJECTED. THE GOVERNOR WOULD PROBABLY DO SO, BUT
SIGNIFICANT POINT IS THAT MERE THREAT OF DISSOLUTION
MIGHT BE ENOUGH TO SPLIT THE OPPOSITION. EVEN WITHOUT
THREAT OF DISSOLUTION THERE IS QUESTION AS TO WHETHER
OPPOSITION WOULD STAND FIRM IN NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION.
AUST COMM BELIEVES IT WOULD. HE NOTES, HOWEVER, THAT
CONSIDERABLE LOBBYING IS NOW GOING ON WHICH COULD HELP
KENILOREA. CHURCHES, BUSINESS COMMUNITY, AND BRITISH
ADMINISTRATION ARE FIRMLY SUPPORTING KENILOREA WHOM
THEY REGARD AS RESPECTABLE AND THEIR EFFORTS MAY MOVE
SOME OF THE OPPOSITION MEMBERS.

4. AUST COMM, WHILE NOTING IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT
MAKE ASSESSMENT ON BALANCE, BELIEVES MOST LIKELY THAT
KENILOREA GOVT WILL BE DEFEATED NEXT MONTH AND
REPLACED BY A COALITION GOVT LED BY MAMALONI.

5. REPORT BEING POUCHED EA/ANP.
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